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DA of New Orleans Silent on the 'Plot'

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New Orleans, La., Feb. 20 (AP)—A district attorney is keeping secret the details of an investigation he says he is making of the Kennedy assassination, contending federal intervention might only slow him down.

Jim Garrison, betting his investigators can prove a conspiracy in New Orleans led to the death of President John F. Kennedy, spurned a suggestion he give his facts to the U. S. Attorney General who could pass them on to President Johnson.

"I am running this investigation, not the President, not the Attorney General," said Garrison.

"I'm in charge of the operation, and we've made a lot of progress working this way. So I don't propose to make any changes that might result in a slowdown and make us less effective."

Asked what the FBI is doing about Garrison's probe, an FBI spokesman said, "The only thing I can say regarding any questions about this is, 'no comment.'"

After New Orleans newspapers broke the story of his investigation on Friday, Garrison said "irresponsible release of so many details" would delay the arrests he said would be forthcoming.

The release of details and names, he said, "has nowcreated a problem for us in finding witnesses and getting cooperation from other withness and in at least one case has endangered the life of a witness—a possible witness—so that whatever timetable we might have had before is somewhat extended now."

'Made Some Progress'

Garrison's statement that an assassination plot was conceived here, that he will find and arrest the conspirators and that he will obtain convictions caused widespread furor.

Just what does he know at this point?

"Well, I can't sum it up in terms of individuals or what might turn out to be evidence. I can say that we have been investigating the role of the city of New Orleans in the assassination of President Kennedy, and we have made some progress—I think substantial progress. At least we were making progress until the newspapers revealed a number of details.

"We were keeping it confidential and were hoping to keep it confidential until the time came to make some arrests."

The 6-foot-6 district attorney refused to go into the question of whether only Lee Harvey Oswald was involved in the assassination of Kennedy in Dallas Nov. 22, 1963.

'Others Were Involved'

"I'd rather not comment on that," Garrison said.

"I will say this: that from our inquiry into the matters, there is no question at all that other individuals were involved in the initial planning in the New Orleans area which culminated in the Death of President Kennedy."

In Miami, Cuban exile Bernard Torres, 32, who helped the Secret Service guard President Kennedy in Miami four days before the assassination, said Garrison had engaged him to look into the background of some Cubans reported to have been with Oswald shortly before the shooting in Dallas.

Torres said he believes the Warren Commission—which said its exhaustive investigation showed there was no credible evidence that anyone else was implicated—will be proved incomplete.

In San Diego, attorney Melvin Belli said Oswald and Jack Ruby, the man who slew Oswald after Kennedy's death, were in New Orleans at the same time but it was just a coincidence.

Belli, who defended Ruby in his trial for the slaying of Oswald, said he does not believe there was any plot to kill Kennedy.

Their presence in New Orleans "was a coincidence, it was absolutely innocent and there was nothing sinister about it," Belli said.

He added that he knew Ruby had activity in New Orleans and with Cuba, but he was just trying to ingratiate himself with a wealthy Mafia type who was involved in Las Vegas gambling activities."

This was typical of Ruby's efforts to be identified with the wealthy and powerful, Belli said.